



Maricopa Association of Governments

High Capacity Transit Plan

A new study that could change the way people travel around Maricopa County

Newsletter 1

BRINGING HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT TO THE VALLEY OF THE SUN

As part of a High Capacity Transit Plan, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is reviewing several advanced transit technologies to determine if they might be implemented into the transportation network of the MAG region. The Plan will evaluate the feasibility of transit alternatives along existing freight rail corridors and identify other corridors where new transit services might operate. The efforts of this study will result in a Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan that will identify a network of transit improvements designed to enhance the mobility of residents in the MAG region.

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is the study sponsor. MAG enlisted a team of consultants, headed by the IBI Group, to oversee the study.

MAG serves as the regional agency for the metropolitan Phoenix area. MAG provides regional planning and policy decisions in areas of transportation, air quality, water quality, regional development, and human services.



What is High Capacity Transit?

With Maricopa County's booming population and employment growth, new transit services will be required to help move increasing numbers of commuters. High capacity transit technologies can take many forms in order to meet the needs of the MAG region:

- **Commuter Rail:** Fast, long-distance transit using passenger trains in freight rail corridors. Stations are located approximately 3 to 5 miles apart, and may include park-and-ride facilities.
- **Light Rail Transit:** In-street or grade separated operation of light rail vehicles. Stations or stops are located less than 1 mile apart. The Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail System is an example of this technology.
- **Heavy Rail:** Faster, but more expensive than light rail, with more frequent stops, longer trains, and a higher passenger capacity. Usually built as an elevated system or as a subway.
- **Automated Guideway Transit:** Similar to light rail, only trains are operated automatically without a driver. Variations include monorails, people movers, and elevated Skytrains.
- **Bus Rapid Transit:** Faster than typical bus service. Uses limited-stop buses operating in dedicated corridors or on existing roadways. A form of this technology is being implemented on Central Avenue in downtown Phoenix. This technology also includes express bus service in freeway corridors.

When will the Study Take Place?



Old Town Transit Center, San Diego



Commuter Rail, Los Angeles



Bus Rapid Transit, Los Angeles



Light Rail, Los Angeles

The study was initiated in January 2002 and is currently underway. The work that has been completed includes the preparation of a public involvement plan, an extensive review of past studies, and a comparison of high capacity transit technologies. The consulting team has interviewed stakeholders from throughout the MAG region, and identified the level of demand that would be needed to make new high capacity services a success. The consulting team also developed ways to model high capacity transit use and completed an inventory of the existing rail infrastructure.

Much of the groundwork has been completed. The next steps will involve extensive analysis and negotiation, as well as opportunities to involve political leaders and the public in identifying the right set of strategies for high capacity transit services in Maricopa County. Next steps include:

- **Identify Alternatives.** Determine commuter rail feasibility, define which services should be considered, and identify alternative high-capacity concepts.
- **Evaluate Alternatives.** Find the best set of transit alternatives for the MAG region. Compare options by looking at costs, expected ridership, and corridor alternatives.
- **Recommend a Strategy.** Refine the alternatives and choose the best options to develop a transit network. Identify costs and revenues, and prepare an implementation plan.



Light Rail, Los Angeles

Where Are High Capacity Transit Services Being Considered?

Planners have examined possible corridors throughout the MAG region for high capacity transit services, looking at existing regional rail corridors and other high-traffic areas. Based on factors such as population, employment, trip length and congestion, several corridors will be identified as possible candidates for high capacity transit service.



How Will These New Transit Services Fit with Existing and Future Bus and Light Rail Service?

The high capacity transit services developed as part of this study will be designed to enhance the existing and planned transit network of the MAG region. Proposed corridors and technologies will be integrated with the Central Phoenix/East Valley light rail system through shared stations or bus connections. The goal is to build upon the success of the existing transit services in the MAG region to further improve mobility and attract new riders to transit.

Why Should We Develop a High Capacity Transit Plan?

Traffic congestion, air quality concerns, and expanding communities are some of the challenges we face when we travel in the MAG region. Commuter rail and other high capacity transit alternatives offer travel options in addition to, or in combination with, taking a car or bus.

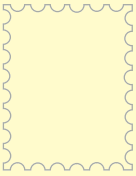
Planning for Change.

MAG is currently developing a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that will replace the existing Long Range Transportation Plan. The new RTP will provide a policy framework to guide transportation investments over the next twenty years. For the RTP to be effective, Maricopa County will need a balanced multimodal transportation system that addresses regional priorities, many of which can be addressed through high capacity transit. This High Capacity Transit Plan will be integrated with the development of the RTP.



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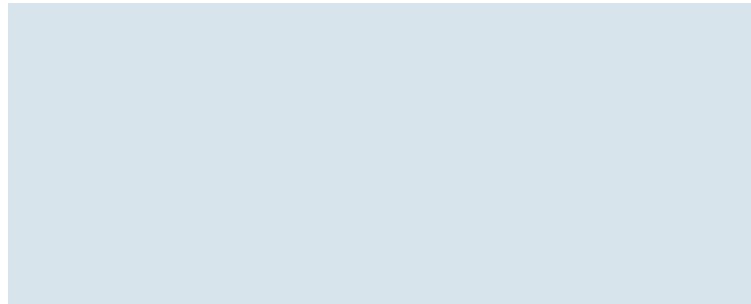
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STAY INFORMED

Meetings, draft reports, and presentations about the study are available on the Web:

www.mag.maricopa.gov/project.cms?item=474

Questions? Call Dawn M. Coomer, MAG Multi-Modal Program Manager, at (602) 254-6300.

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